

5 IDEOLOGY, ECONOMY AND THE BRITISH CINEMA

John Hill

Analysis of the cinema's place within capitalism can broadly be seen to have entailed a double focus for Marxists, both generated and legitimated by a sense of what constitutes a proper and recognisable Marxist concern. In general terms this might be characterised as a concern both with determination and with effectivity. On the one hand, a 'materialist' concern to place cinema via its social and economic determinants whether grasped in terms of technology, economy (cinema's subservience to the logic of capital accumulation), class base or conjunctural complex. On the other, a 'critical' concern to place the cinema via its role within the social formation, to account for cinema in its ideological clothes, its complicity with a continuing structure of domination. Yet the articulation of these twin foci has remained problematic. The emphasis here is on articulation, with its demand for a structured combination which is more than mere addition or a setting of the two beside each other as equal but alternative choices (precisely the language of 'on the one hand' and 'on the other'). Such difficulty is not merely the product of bad analysis or conceptual confusion (though this may of course be the case) but is symptomatic of a more generalised problem of emphasis within Marxist analysis with its polar temptations of economism and idealism. In both cases the problem of articulation is effectively displaced through a dissolution of one of the terms into the other: the effect of ideology becomes directly 'readable' in the sum of its determinations (the ownership of the cinematic means of production, the logic of the market, and so on) or alternatively the determinative complex becomes evacuated from the ideological scene, 'unreadable' either directly or indirectly. And in occupation of the hinterland is the compromise whereby ideology and economy are seen to coalesce, but in some unexplicated liaison whose specific parameters and modalities remain occluded (take, for example, the Comolli/Narboni (1971) formulation: 'every film . . . is determined by the ideology which produces it . . . but is all the more thoroughly and completely determined because . . . its very manufacture mobilises powerful economic forces' (p. 30). Indeed, the necessity to resort to such ultimately evasive formulations such as 'all the more' seems almost

to be the condition upon which, for example, is the 'relative' is 'relative' to what; and just 'mediation'? And it may be p attempts are inaugurated to c 'balance' so often tends to be of the other. This would seem cussed here: both set out with ideology through an analysis end up by giving one privilege Murdock and Golding (1977: contribution to this volume) largely collapsed into econom reverse is true — film (and id its determinations.

In 'Capitalism, Communism Murdock and Peter Golding theory which have placed cu beginning with cultural artef economic base rather than vi can be accounted for in term minism and the popularity o Golding nonetheless argue th the economic base we are 'th give Marxist sociology its dis (1977a, p. 17) and that whi minism would nevertheless c and their changing distributi many levers in cultural prod with material on media inte with two general consequen processes outlined: '1) the r decline as market forces ex 2) this evolutionary process those voices lacking econo

It is of course possible to level of empirical observatio originality in the drive for r on the possibility of opposi media, consequent upon th interest of capital in genera

to be the condition upon which such work can begin: how 'relative', for example, is the 'relative' in 'relative autonomy' and what precisely is 'relative' to what; and just what is 'mediating' what in the notion of 'mediation'? And it may be precisely because of this that, when attempts are inaugurated to combine the twin modes of analysis, the 'balance' so often tends to be lost and one is emphasised at the expense of the other. This would seem to be the case in the two examples discussed here: both set out with the broad ambition of examining textual ideology through an analysis of its conditions of production, but both end up by giving one privilege over the other. Thus in the case of Murdock and Golding (1977a; but see also 1974a and 1974b and their contribution to this volume) media (and ideological) specificity is largely collapsed into economy while for *Cahiers du Cinéma* (1972) the reverse is true — film (and ideological) specificity is largely evacuated of its determinations.

In 'Capitalism, Communication and Class Relations', Graham Murdock and Peter Golding explicitly attack those brands of Marxist theory which have placed cultural criticism above economic analysis, beginning with cultural artefacts and then working backwards to the economic base rather than vice versa. Although for them this proclivity can be accounted for in terms of a reaction against economic determinism and the popularity of 'critical philosophy', Murdock and Golding nonetheless argue that by abandoning any sustained analysis of the economic base we are 'thereby jettisoning the very elements that give Marxist sociology its distinctiveness and explanatory power' (1977a, p. 17) and that while not wishing to return to economic determinism would nevertheless claim 'that control over material resources and their changing distribution are ultimately the most powerful of the many levers in cultural production' (p. 20). The thesis is fleshed out with material on media integration and diversification and concludes with two general consequences for cultural production of the economic processes outlined: '1) the range of material available will tend to decline as market forces exclude all but the commercially successful and 2) this evolutionary process is not random, but systematically excludes those voices lacking economic power and resources' (p. 37).

It is of course possible to quibble with Murdock and Golding at the level of empirical observation — their under-emphasis on the need for originality in the drive for media expansion and similar under-emphasis on the possibility of oppositional viewpoints within the commercial media, consequent upon their problematic conflation of the long-term interest of capital in general and short-term interest of the individual

entrepreneur¹ — but the concern here is rather with the way the general problem of ideology and economy is established and resolved by them. The concern here circulates around the 'gap' which remains for Murdock and Golding between economic production on the one hand and media forms on the other, which is only overcome for them through the dissolution of media specificity (the particular organisations of matters of expression) and consequent reduction of the media to transcriptions of socio-political ideologies originated elsewhere. Thus, for example, Murdock and Golding criticise a large proportion of media studies for concentrating almost entirely on news and failing to address themselves to 'the main dramatic, fictional and entertainment forms which make up the bulk of most people's media fare' (p. 36) — yet it is precisely these forms which Murdock and Golding themselves would seem unable to account for in the absence of any provision of the means for their conceptualisation. At most their concluding theses would allow them to account for the repetition and exclusion of particular forms once constituted but not for their dominance within the media nor for their particular operations. Or they can only do so through an attribution of unproblematic transparency to these forms whereby the difference between the various media in terms of matters of expression and conventions can be elided and the way formal conventions actually work in meaning-production be ignored. Thus when Murdock and Golding discuss the 'readings' of media imagery presented by others such as Poulantzas, Berger and Barthes, judging it a 'bald beginning', it is in turn difficult to see how Murdock and Golding can even reach such a bare starting point purely from their perspective. For 'imagery' is not only the end product of an economic process, but the product of a work of signification as well with its own internal dynamics and operations (and internal history), which is precisely the domain then that Murdock and Golding ignore.

It is this field which Stephen Heath has tried to capture in his use of the term 'machine': 'cinema itself seized exactly between industry and product as the stock of constraints and definitions from which film can be distinguished as a specific signifying practice' (1976, p. 256), where 'specificity' implies not only a sense of media peculiarity but also a semiotic particularity (signification through both codes unique to the cinema and broader socio-cultural ones) and 'practice' stresses process: 'film as a work of production of meanings'. That is to say, film does not merely 'express' or 'represent' but is itself an active process of signification through which meaning is produced. Two consequences for a consideration of ideology seem to follow. First, that the media are not

merely 'empty' forms which ideologies, but enjoy their own the cinematic 'machine': to theorise this, for example of Jean-Paul Fargier (1977) vector of ideologies already specific ideology: 'the impression' is fundamentally is irreducibly ideological point that the 'ideological' outside of the operations which then, because they be seen necessarily to conditions' nor likewise his or Mulhern has argued for below) it would here be of a literary text cannot author's pre-existing ideological positions affirmed by a formal positions formally adopted effects of the form of the with the latter' (1975, p. not merely express ideological constitutive of ideologies ingredients to be detected again, as active production of positivities but also as 'solutions' potentially being a progenitive system (and of 'contradiction' retrieved merely place it as a reflection of the economic and the Marxist functionalism — difficulties). For Murdock relationship (ideologies a nature of the ruling ideological assumptions of which its entrenchment of such power needs to be clearly demonstrated ideology is not just 'entr

merely 'empty' forms which neutrally transcribe socio-political ideologies, but enjoy their own level of effectivity which is the property of the cinematic 'machine' and not the cinematic institution. One attempt to theorise this, for example, at a general level can be seen in the work of Jean-Paul Fargier (1971) where cinema is considered not merely as a vector of ideologies already in circulation, but as producing its own specific ideology: 'the impression of reality'. Now whether or not we accept fully this formulation (for example, it is not at all clear that the 'impression' is fundamental to 'bourgeois cinema' or that its appearance is irreducibly ideological), it does nonetheless help clarify the point that the 'ideological effect' of the cinema cannot be understood outside of the operations of its particular conventions and constraints which then, because they carry their own specific effectivities, cannot be seen necessarily to correspond to a maker's personality or 'intentions' nor likewise his or her social and political beliefs. As Francis Mulhern has argued for literature, so with reservations (considered below) it would here be accepted for film: 'the formal characteristics of a literary text cannot be considered as the aesthetic expression of its author's pre-existing ideological positions . . . Moreover, the ideological positions affirmed by a literary text need not even coincide with the positions formally adopted by its author. They are the determinate effects of the form of the text, and may in fact be deeply inconsistent with the latter' (1975, p. 85). Second, it follows that if the media do not merely express ideologies, they must then be considered as actively constitutive of ideologies. That is to say, ideologies are not merely ingredients to be detected in the media, but also its products. And again, as active productions, ideologies are not merely to be seen as sets of positivities but also as processes of exclusion — with these 'exclusions' potentially being able to feed back to disturb or deform their progenitive system (and thereby furnishing our analysis with a notion of 'contradiction' retrieved from both a reductionism which would merely place it as a reflection of contradictions determined at the level of the economic and the homeostasis of a reproduction-orientated Marxist functionalism — though as we shall see later not then without difficulties). For Murdock and Golding, however, it is the former relationship (ideologies as ingredients): 'The first task is to spell out the nature of the ruling ideology, and to specify the propositions and assumptions of which it is composed. Secondly, the appearance and entrenchment of such propositions and assumptions in media output needs to be clearly demonstrated' (1977a, p. 35). But the ruling ideology is not just 'entrenched' in the media: it is actually produced.

For there is no general or abstract system which is the ruling ideology: rather the ruling ideology is only constituted in and through the concrete: '[Ideology] is there and yet it is not there. It appears indeed if the general structure of a dominant ideology is almost impossible to grasp, reflexively and analytically as a whole. The dominant ideology always appears, precisely, in and through the particular' (Hall 1972b, p. 82). Indeed, as Hall and his colleagues at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University have gone on to show, the task of the media as part of the State may indeed be to create an ideological unity where none before existed (Hall *et al.*, 1976; Chambers *et al.*, 1977): 'Far from expressing or reflecting an already given class interest, television is one of the sites where ideological elements and positions are articulated into a specific type of political class discourse' (Chambers *et al.*, 1977, p. 114). And this may be part of the problem. For Murdock and Golding classes are by and large seen as already constituted, with their own social and economic identities which can then be reflected or not reflected within the media, rather than as complex and contradictory unities without any necessary homogeneity at the cultural level but rather 'represented' through a variety of forms.

However, given the impossibility of grasping ideology purely in terms of class origins we must then avoid evacuating class from our analysis altogether. Thus, from beginning with similar premises, one tendency has been to define ideology neither by its class base nor its reproduction of the social formation but merely as that part of the social formation that exists when we subtract the political and economic levels. Raymond Williams (1973) has argued that if the concept of 'social totality' is to be retrieved from a mere sociology of inter-connections, then it must include a notion of 'domination'. Likewise I would wish to argue that if ideology is to be rescued from a significant egalitarianism (and conjunctural analysis from a new form of empiricism) it must also include a notion of ideologies not just as discursive systems but as ultimately maintaining a structure of dominance. Not of course directly or crudely, but in complex and contradictory ways whose specific potencies and inflections have to be analysed in particular and concrete ways. This is not then to imply a subscription to the thesis of cultural transparency. It is quite possible to concede that human beings may always be subjects insofar as they are constituted in and through discursive practices of whose grounds they are not conscious, but this does not then imply that they will always be subjected (in the sense of subjection) to the particular discursive practices

of capitalism. For here cultural relations of domination, just discourse.

Likewise I would not wish to see the problem of deterritorialisation with Hindess (1977) and Hindess and Hirst (1977) (total autonomy or total deterritorialisation for this in-between). Just as we can learn from the practices from its material conditions, we can also learn from the agencies and apparatuses. But it follows that they then tell us about the socio-political ideologies). The problem of deterritorialisation must not be conceived as a single-layered but rather multi-layered and complex set of constraints of the 'machine' or 'economy'.

Returning to Golding and represented in this volume is to a number of the problem position of the privileging of a specific polemic against both a 'defence' of their own positions posed here, their further investigation. Golding's analysis cannot provide an action governing a text's construction nonetheless turns the pertinent production relations may not analysis this does not then can then be read forward from Golding and Murdock's second analysis is a form of 'context' the significant advances of (as classically understood) a 'qualitative'. Again the argument thesis on methodological concerns the required conceptual and generating demands of method adjudicate the value of the that can really only make sense

of capitalism. For here cultural opacity is not necessarily allied to relations of domination, just as ideology is not then coterminous with discourse.

Likewise I would not wish these conclusions to lead to an abandonment of the problem of determination (and here I would part company with Hindess (1977) and Hirst (1976b) whose either/or choice of total autonomy or total determination can find no theoretical coherence for this in-between). Just as we cannot read off cinema's signifying practices from its material conditions of existence, so we cannot provide a coherent account of cinema which evacuates such material agencies and apparatuses. Because they don't tell it all, it does not follow that they then tell us nothing (likewise 'creators' intentions and socio-political ideologies). But just as class is not a monolith, so determination must not be conceived as single-layered and uni-directional, but rather multi-layered and complex and operant within 'ideology' (the constraints of the 'machine') as well as between 'ideology' and 'economy'.

Returning to Golding and Murdock via their more recent paper as represented in this volume it can be seen that they address themselves to a number of the problems posed here largely to re-assert their initial position of the privileging of the economic but with the novel input of a specific polemic against 'textural [sic] analysis'. As this can be read as both a 'defence' of their own position and an 'attack' on some of the positions posed here, their three main arguments may well merit further investigation. Golding and Murdock firstly maintain that textual analysis cannot provide an adequate account of the relations of production governing a text's construction. This is undoubtedly correct, but nonetheless turns the pertinent issue on its head: for while indeed production relations may not be able to be read back from textual analysis this does not then imply the converse — that textual processes can then be read forward from those same relations of production.² Golding and Murdock's second argument refers to inference. Textual analysis is a form of 'content analysis' (a label hardly doing justice to the significant advances of much textual analysis over content analysis as classically understood) and is thus necessarily 'circumstantial' and 'qualitative'. Again the argument is carried on by means of a reversal. A thesis on methodological capabilities is made to do service instead of the required conceptual analysis. Rather than the problems of theory generating demands of methodological procedure, technical possibilities adjudicate the value of theory instead. Furthermore it is an argument that can really only make sense if we are to assume that inference is

something peculiar to content analysis rather than a condition general to sociology. It would indeed be a barren and denuded sociology (at best an operationism whereby concepts become fully defined by their procedures of measurement) that could lay claim to have resolved the problems of inference. The third argument of Golding and Murdock is that exclusive concentration on textual analysis would necessarily be truncated and partial in its explanation of ideological production. This is, of course, true – but in establishing the opposite case Golding and Murdock are in danger of an equal partialness and truncation. They themselves recognise that economic analysis cannot be sufficient in itself, but then fail to theorise that very 'insufficiency' thereby themselves 'bracketing off' the very issues which are at stake.

If then it can be argued that Golding and Murdock devalue the signifiatory level of the media and that this has effects for how they can formulate a theory of ideology, let us now look at the reverse tendency in the work of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* editorial group (1972) and its implications. An increasingly common response to this analysis of 'Young Mr. Lincoln' is to note the inadequacy of *Cahiers'* attempt to define the historical determinations of the film but nonetheless to applaud the actual textual analysis as if the two were quite happily separable (Campbell, 1977, p. 30; Caughie, 1977-8, p. 93) despite the defined object of the piece:

... to distinguish the historicity of [a number of 'classic' films including 'Young Mr. Lincoln's'] inscription: the relation of these films to the codes (social, cultural ...) for which they are a site of intersection, and to other films themselves held in an intertextual space: therefore, the relation of these films to the ideology which they convey, a particular 'phase' which they represent, and to the events (present, past, historical, mythical, fictional) which they aimed to represent' [*Cahiers du Cinéma*, 1972, p. 6].

While agreeing with such writers in their diagnosis of a certain failure, I would nonetheless not want to gloss this over in terms of 'the intrinsic difficulty of the task' or an 'unhappy contingency' but rather I would see the imbalance as consequent on the premises founding the analysis and thus necessarily undermining the original 'object'.

Unlike Golding and Murdock, whose object was to account for fairly general features of the media in terms of the structural principles of the economy, *Cahiers* selected a specific media artefact – one film – which they sought to account for in fairly specific ways. This they

then did through a rather...
ting for the movie's appeal...
the Republican Zanuck wa...
Lincoln in order to promo...
election of 1940. Brewster...
culty of substantiating suc...
ignored in favour of the m...
historical figure of Lincoln...
(*Cahiers du Cinéma*, 1972...
is more than a symptom of...
etical choice. Thus a divisi...
ideological determinations...
ideological undertaking ac...
being a property of the fo...
between their own analysi...
whereby 'an artistic produ...
according to a linear, expr...

The consequence of thi...
can only have a limited fu...
film's ideological role (wh...
ness' of *Cahiers'* refusal to...
minants, but rather to exa...
joins with the other objec...
tiating themselves from ot...
pretation, mechanistic str...
specify their project as th...
be seen as according recog...
signification. *Cahiers* are r...
logical statements' in one...
follow 'the film's process...
This might be seen as an c...
chronic experience of wat...
'A process of active readi...
within what they leave un...
In such terms, then, the in...
can be seen to be misplace...
covered independent of co...
of more decisive importan...
not hesitate to force the t...
constitutes itself as a text...
(p. 37). But the dilemmas

then did through a rather 'unmaterialist' mode of operation — accounting for the movie's appearance in terms of the intention of one man: the Republican Zanuck wanted to make a film about the Republican Lincoln in order to promote a Republican victory in the Presidential election of 1940. Brewster (1973) suggests that, faced with the difficulty of substantiating such a thesis, this specific ideological purpose is ignored in favour of the more general one of 'the reformulation of the historical figure of Lincoln on the level of the myth and the eternal' (*Cahiers du Cinéma*, 1972, p. 13). However, it seems that this division is more than a symptom of intellectual difficulty, but rather of theoretical choice. Thus a division can be seen being made between the ideological determinations of the film (Zanuck's purpose) and the ideological undertaking actualised in the film, the latter not in fact being a property of the former, and hence clarifying *Cahiers'* distinction between their own analysis and that which they call 'demystification' whereby 'an artistic product' is 'linked to its socio-historical context according to a linear, expressive, direct causality' (p. 7).

The consequence of this then is that political and economic analysis can only have a limited function and can only loosely, if at all, place the film's ideological role (which is not to question the essential 'correctness' of *Cahiers'* refusal to 'read off' ideology from its social determinants, but rather to examine its theoretical effects). And this conjoins with the other object that *Cahiers* set themselves. For in differentiating themselves from other types of reading (commentary, interpretation, mechanistic structuralism and demystification) *Cahiers* specify their project as that of an 'active reading'. At one level this can be seen as according recognition to the 'work' of the text, its process of signification. *Cahiers* are not content merely to abstract broad 'ideological statements' in one simultaneous operation, but rather wish to follow 'the film's process of becoming-a-text', its 'dynamic inscription'. This might be seen as an operation which traces the audience's diachronic experience of watching a film, but for *Cahiers* it involves more: 'A process of active reading is to make them say what they have to say within what they leave unsaid, to reveal their constituent lacks' (p. 8). In such terms, then, the initial concern with a socio-historical situating can be seen to be misplaced, for there is no textual meaning to be discovered independent of consumption anyway, which becomes in fact of more decisive importance than the moment of production: 'We do not hesitate to force the text, even to re-write it insofar as the film only constitutes itself as a text by integration of the reader's knowledge' (p. 37). But the dilemmas are in the very formulation. For if the text

only exists through 'integration of the reader's knowledge' in what sense can they be said to be 'forcing' or 're-writing'? Does the object-text have an existence independent of the knowing subject after all, or is there at least some recognition of 'correctness' in the process of 'meaning-extraction'? The problem can be posed in terms of validity — does the by and large correct observation that the text only exists through the 'integration of the reader's knowledge' allow *carte blanche* in analysis, or do there remain 'controls' or 'limit-positions' which continue to govern the analysing discourse?

Clearly *Cahiers* are concerned that their reading should not be viewed as a purely personal or idiosyncratic one (they make recurring references to readings being 'authorised', of occurrences in the film bringing out its 'true meaning', and so on); but they are equally clearly, through their use of the language of psychoanalysis, not attempting to reproduce a 'lay' reading or any actual historical reading. Indeed, they pose their critical activity as exactly opposite to the norms of conventional consumption: 'a kind of non-reading' (p. 6) governed by the 'transparency' and 'presence' of 'classic' representation and narrative. The problem is then not only of what guarantees their reading (can the methodological licence apparently legitimated by their founding premises be overcome without theoretical circularity?³) but perhaps more importantly for our purposes, what this might mean in relation to our understanding of ideology. What are we told about the ideological project of the film, whether successful or failed, if the reading which *Cahiers* locates was never in fact accessible to a general audience? (A claim referring us back to the privileged warrant of psychoanalysis to explicate the unconscious workings of ideology would, apart from problems of validity, still have to cope with the problems of the dehistoricised and decontextualised versions of the unconscious and ideology it sought to work with). A division could perhaps be made between the film's general ideological undertaking — the reformulation of the historical figure of Lincoln — which could then be viewed as fairly accessible to an audience ('transparent' and 'present') — and *Cahiers*' analysis of the costs of producing that ideological formulation, the repressions involved. But what then is the significance of *Cahiers*' formulation to the effect that 'a distortion of the ideological project by the writing of the film' is manifested within the film (1972, p. 37)? For whom is the ideological project distorted if it takes a skilled reading based on psychoanalysis to reveal it, and in just what way is our understanding of the film's ideological effectivity altered?

Subsequent work (Willemen, 1971 and 1972-3; Johnston, 1975)

which has built upon *Cahiers*' project necessarily abandoning historical legitimacy either from its use-value or from its institution of a more 'progressive' temporary film-making (the strategy then quite self-consciously constituting readings (whether skilled or lay) as irrelevant (though Willemen (1971) notes the audience's non-awareness of this for a historical sensitivity if contrasted with Sirk's films just as the claims of realism go unnoticed in their own day, resting on their pertinence for a contemporary context). That the attempt to combine economic and ideological readings has been effectively removed from the project, making such 'revisions' has been a 'strategic' move at all of the enterprise here called *Cahiers*. The theory of history, whereby film is seen and for the present with validity, is a knowledge of the current conjuncture (1977-8; McCabe, 1977; Ellis, 1977) — see whether such work has been a solution to problems of relativism and political commitment of the 'current conjuncture' remains a foundational concepts).

It is in this way then that the *Cahiers* set of problems to those confronted by Golding. Whereas Murdock and Golding to signficatory processes, *Cahiers* point of accrediting them an almost total allied to the problem of consumption. The problem did not arise — for them — 'read out' from the media texts that they correctly refuse to see the audience's textual meaning, but in doing so they ignore the socio-historical context. The stance here is to suggest that just as film is from production, so audience response is properties of the text only. The *Cahiers* notions of the passive consumer — the productive of meaning through a

which has built upon *Cahiers'* protocols has then evaded such issues by necessarily abandoning historical analysis altogether and deriving its legitimacy either from its use-value for contemporary criticism (the institution of a more 'progressive' mode of reading texts) or for contemporary film-making (the strategies it might suggest). Readings are then quite self-consciously constructed in opposition to actual historical readings (whether skilled or lay), the evidence of which then becomes irrelevant (though Willemsen (1972-3) at once conjoins an acceptance of the audience's non-awareness of textual contradictions with the demand for a historical sensitivity if contemporary critics are not to 'misread' Sirk's films just as the claims of relevance for aesthetic strategies, unnoticed in their own day, rests on an unexplicated assumption as to their pertinence for a contemporary audience). As such then it is clear that the attempt to combine economic and ideological analysis has been effectively removed from the agenda (Kuhn, 1975). Accompanying such 'revisions' has been a 'stronger' repudiation of the possibility at all of the enterprise here called for, made in terms of current work on the theory of history, whereby film analysis can only be carried on in and for the present with validity being guaranteed by political knowledge of the current conjuncture (Hindess and Hirst, 1975; Tribe, 1977-8; McCabe, 1977; Ellis, 1977). As yet however it is difficult to see whether such work has been adequately able to resolve its own problems of relativism and political opportunism (the ritual invocation of the 'current conjuncture' remaining as yet peculiarly empty of foundational concepts).

It is in this way then that the *Cahiers* analysis reveals a complementary set of problems to those considered in relation to Murdock and Golding. Whereas Murdock and Golding fail to pay adequate attention to signification processes, *Cahiers* conversely emphasise these to the point of accrediting them an almost total autonomy. This is in turn allied to the problem of consumption. For Murdock and Golding the problem did not arise — for them the audience can by and large be 'read out' from the media texts themselves. *Cahiers*, on the other hand, correctly refuse to see the audience as locked into some pre-ordained textual meaning, but in doing so tend to dissolve the text altogether and ignore the socio-historical context in which it is received. The importance here is to suggest that just as the text cannot be read off directly from production, so audience response cannot be read back from properties of the text only. The emphasis on signification breaks with notions of the passive consumer — audiences are rather seen as actively productive of meaning through a knowledge and activation of codes

(but not then as self-conscious 'decoders') — but this must then be understood in actual conditions of social and historical readership. Neale (1977) has argued in the case of propaganda that 'it can't simply be a matter of reading off a set of textual characteristics. What has to be identified is the use to which a particular text is put, to its function within a particular situation, to its place within cinema conceived as a social practice' (p. 39). This is the case for Neale because he wants to see propaganda as a form of address which 'produces a position of social struggle' (p. 32) and, for him, such a position cannot be purely the product of textual address. However, while Neale himself would not want to do this, it does seem possible to generalise this to notions of textual 'effectivity' (including ideological effectivity) beyond those which imply forms of social action. And thus an analysis of media ideology could not rest with an analysis of production and text alone but must in turn include a theory of readership and analysis of consumption (indeed outside of which there is no text at all). So just as production and text are articulated through the 'machine' of social and historical cinematic conventions and constraints, so the 'machine' of socially and historically placed readership cuts across the text and its audience.

The 'meaning' then of a film is not something to be discovered purely in the text itself (into which the spectator may or may not be bound) but is constituted in the interaction between the text and its users. The early claim of semiotics to be in some way able to account for a text's functioning through an immanent analysis was essentially misfounded in its failure to perceive that any textual system could only have meaning in relation to codes not purely textual, and that the recognition, distribution and activation of these would vary socially and historically. On the other hand the fact that we are concerned with codes, that is systems of regularity, should indicate that this does not then imply textual meaning to be dispersed altogether whereby all readings become equal and novelty becomes a virtue in itself. Likewise it does not abandon us to uses and gratifications theory with its collapse of the text into an individualistic and psychologistic problematic. Rather we would want to argue that readership must be understood in terms of broader patterns of socio-cultural consumption whereby texts are read both 'aesthetically', in terms of codes specifically 'artistic', and 'socially', in relation to the broader contours of life-experience engendered via class, race, sex and nation, where again these are not conceived as homogeneous but variegated (and thereby resisting the associated assumptions often governing analyses of the

passive consumer of the development of a homogeneous culture; as Swingewood argues, the ideology and capitalist culture — has a certain cultural richness and diversity. The mode of production has served to create a new value (1977, p.x.). If a notion such as value, it is not as a means of fixing others, but rather a means of creating conditions, a text will tend to be placed through social and historical codes.

In this we can see that the text is not then to posit the unified signifier, the novelty lying in this analysis placed. Following from this it is analysis predicates should not be the evidence of actual socio-historical conditions that as film analysis develops a battery of methodological tools of the institution of its own specific particular credentials (the code of disciplinary discourses such as semiotics deny the importance of such disciplines lies not in the discovery of some 'true meaning'), or the interests of subversion, but in a situation through which particular contexts. As Barthes puts it in 'operation contrary to the common society' (1975, p. 15). But there is an analysis of how the form of concomitant difficulties, or meaning ('writerly') mode of consumption this is not then to argue that evidence raised to the level of consciousness certain very central types of meaning explicitly recognised — but the 'consciousness' is not then arbitrary level of experience (which does

passive consumer of the development of society itself towards a 'mass' homogeneity; as Swingewood argues, 'capitalist economy and technology and capitalist culture — have achieved new principles of economic and cultural richness and diversity . . . the development of the capitalist mode of production has served to augment, not destroy, civil society' (1977, p.x.). If a notion such as 'preferred reading' then is to have a value, it is not as a means of fixing one interpretation over and above others, but rather a means of accounting for how, under certain conditions, a text will tend to be read in particular ways because of the way meaning is placed through the articulation of particular aesthetic, social and historical codes.

In this we can see that the task of ideological analysis is not the production of new meanings but rather of accounting for how old meanings are generated for and through particular audiences (which is not then to posit the unified sign-community of much early semiotics), the novelty lying in this analysis and the new problematic in which it is placed. Following from this it is clear that the readings which such analysis predicates should not be so fashioned as to contradict the evidence of actual socio-historical readings. Indeed, there is a real danger that as film analysis develops an ever more complex and sophisticated battery of methodological tools it loses sight of social analyses in favour of the institution of its own skilled community of readers with its own particular credentials (the codes of academia and advanced interdisciplinary discourses such as semiotics and psychoanalysis). This is not to deny the importance of such disciplines, but to argue that their value lies not in the discovery of some new signified (a new way of capturing the text's 'true meaning'), or the liberation of the signifier in the interests of subversion, but in accounting for the processes of signification through which particular meanings are produced in specific contexts. As Barthes puts it in his influential *S/Z*: 're-reading is an operation contrary to the commercial and ideological habits of our society' (1975, p. 15). But then whether his own multiple re-reading is an analysis of how the form of realism is textually produced with all its concomitant difficulties, or merely the introduction of a new (more 'writerly') mode of consumption, would be open to dispute. Likewise this is not then to argue that each and every meaning is to be found raised to the level of consciousness. Obviously within our culture certain very central types of meaning surround us without being explicitly recognised — but the identification of such 'non-consciousness' is not then arbitrary and unless some 'control' at the level of experience (which does not thereby become privileged in

any responsibility to disentangle the particular levels and interrelations of the social formation in favour of an idealist notion of culture, removed from its material bases, evacuated of its divisions and run together into an undifferentiated mesh of experience, privileged and unquestioned. Thus, for Barr, it can make sense to substitute the 'old-fashioned impressionistic' term 'national character' with presumably the modern but for Barr equally impressionistic term 'ideology' (1977, p. 108).

However, it is not altogether coincidental that hostility to the British cinema and analysis of it predominantly in terms of reflection should have been prominent in the literature. For although I have argued against a notion of the media as mere 'transcriptions' and 'reflections', the British cinema has nonetheless been frequently identified as possessing a peculiar quality which has rendered its forms invisible and largely subservient to 'contents' (and hence the hostility towards film-makers for their failure to utilise fully 'the resources of the medium'). As Elsaesser has put it, in the British cinema 'the level of coherence is constituted by an extra-cinematic system (the hypothetical "consensus" or "middle class") brought into the films from outside in order to make them "legible" and not by a cinematic specificity and a formal coherence controlling the aesthetic means by which ideological contents are reflected, transformed or critically expressed within a film' (1972, p. 10) and thus for him rendering a socio-ideological critique of the British cinema all the more appropriate because of its otherwise signifying paucity. And although Elsaesser elides a particular critical preference for a mode of *ciné-signification* with cinematic specificity itself and hence under-emphasises the signifiatory 'work' required to produce formal invisibility (and extra-cinematic coherence which is not just then reflected), his reading of the British cinema clearly accords with not only the aesthetic but also the political dismissal of that cinema for its adoption of an unproblematic realist form, whose ideological effects are precisely seen as properties of the form and only in a limited way its supposed structuring contents.

Putting this another way, if the British cinema can be seen to be largely 'form-less', recent debate about 'realism' has been peculiarly 'content-less'. Thus for McCabe (1974, but see also 1975-6, 1976a and 1976b) the 'classic realist text' is to be defined formally in terms of its hierarchy of discourses, and can be seen to subsume not only the nineteenth-century novel but the standard fictional forms of film and television; while for Burch 'the edifice of illusionism' may be seen as housing 'all the representational practices which rise to dominance along

with the bourgeoisie during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' and continuing 'to dominate massively the cultural life of all capitalist and most socialist countries today' and this has organic links with 'the illusion of parliamentary representation' upon which political class domination is maintained (1976, pp. 54-5). And thus for Burch the analysis of a film's ideological effectivity requires no 'specific attention to the film's diegesis' but rather to the less 'geographically and historically localised' relation of signifier and signified which is the *modus operandi* of representation (1974, pp. 49-50). Now it is clear that both authors are correct to abandon the endless tail-chasing exercise of attempting to define realism by reference to some 'known' eternal reality. Realism has no absolutist kernel but constitutes a set of constructed conventions whereby particular identifications of the 'real' are accorded plausibility. But on the other hand it is likewise by no means apparent that all realisms can then be subsumed under one great Realism (or one Realism with a few sub-variants) and that evaluations of effectivity (in terms of subject-positionality and so on) can be made independently of specific social and historical contexts and specific 'contents' (with which the 'forms' of realism are inextricably in articulation). That is to say, evaluation of the effectivity of realism (including its conservative or progressive qualities) is like evaluation of ideologies — dependent on context, its conditions of production and of consumption and its relations to other discourses (both specifically aesthetic and socio-political), dominant and subordinate in a particular period.

Indeed, examination of the history of 'realisms' would suggest that the claim generally made for a 'new realism' in the arts is rarely made in terms of technique alone, but is usually embodied within a complex repository of social values and attitudes. Because realism is generally bound up with a social extension (the inclusion of hitherto neglected sections of the population) it is usually part of a broader claim to legitimacy by a social group or at least a social syntax not specifically aesthetic. And thus the 'real' in the process of being constructed will discover its groundings less in relation to some supposed external referent and more in the symbolic universe from which it emerges. Thus to take an example of the documentary movement of the 1930s, its particular demand for observation and fidelity in the arts was not merely a technical project but an active social response to the crises of the inter-war period. As Hall has put it: 'The documentary style, though at one level a form of writing, photographing, filming, recording, was at another level, an emergent form of social consciousness: it registered, in the formation of a social rhetoric, the emergent structure of feeling, in

the immediate pre-war and the war, the 'realist' movement which began in cinema at the end of the 1950s contributed to the development of post-war Italian cinema's trajectory in the 1950s – and as a result of its ideological significance despite its marginal, elementary movement.

It can be seen then that some of the problems offered here with potentially opposing the idea of realist forms, analysis must be made (immanent) for the grounds of the textual 'contents' carrying their meaning without then assuming an unproblematic (the sense of the real is specifically constructed the cultural field in which they operate is not to look for the absolute nor to attempt in some way to go beyond its authentic meaning. Rather, some of the particular conditions must exist and in terms of which their sense (the logic of realism precisely as it which it represents).

Thus what we are designating as the 'New Portuguese Cinema' is referring to a cluster of films circumscribed by the titles *Room at the Top* (1959), *Saturday Night* (1960), *A Taste of Honey* (1961), *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1962), *A Kind of Loving* (1962), and *Room at the Top* (1962), upon a particular field of ideas which is the 'sense' of reality. What it draws upon is the data of social development by partitioning the social construction into an account of change and continuity. This constellation then, loosely translated into English, can be seen to take shape pre-eminently in the 1960s, but drawing also on academic social science and post-war party political rhetoric. Thus the social changes, productivity and post-war stability, the economic boom, mixed economy, and welfare state, the social and economic achievement (in the absence of attitudinal change) and of inequalities despite absolute income growth, 'temporary palliatives' (Pinto-Dusché).

th and nineteenth centuries' the cultural life of all capitalist this has organic links with 'the upon which political class (5). And thus for Burch the requires no 'specific attention ss 'geographically and histor- signified which is the *modus* (9-50). Now it is clear that both ss tail-chasing exercise of e to some 'known' eternal but constitutes a set of con- identifications of the 'real' are and it is likewise by no means bsumed under one great variants) and that evaluations onality and so on) can be made orical contexts and specific lism are inextricably in articu- effectivity of realism (including is like evaluation of ideologies of production and of consump- (both specifically aesthetic and ate in a particular period. f 'realisms' would suggest that sm' in the arts is rarely made ly embodied within a complex Because realism is generally clusion of hitherto neglected part of a broader claim to social syntax not specifically ss of being constructed will some supposed external rse from which it emerges. ntary movement of the 1930s, d fidelity in the arts was not social response to the crises of 'The documentary style, though phing, filming, recording, was at l consciousness: it registered, in emergent structure of feeling, in

the immediate pre-war and the war periods' (1972a, p. 100). Likewise the 'realist' movement which began to infiltrate the British commercial cinema at the end of the 1950s constituted part of a particular response to the development of post-war British capitalism and in particular its trajectory in the 1950s — and as such can be seen to have a different ideological significance despite its 'technical' similarities with the documentary movement.

It can be seen then that something of a double prescription is being offered here with potentially opposite pulls on the analysis. That is to say, if purchase is to be secured on the specific socio-historical effectivity of realist forms, analysis must be inter-discursive (as opposed to immanent) for the grounds of their 'sense' to be apprehended (extra-textual 'contents' carrying their own pre-stressed significance) but without then assuming an unproblematic expressiveness or reflection (the sense of the real is specifically a textual constitution). Thus constructing the cultural field in which certain films might be seen to operate is not to look for the absent origin or cause of the films' effects nor to attempt in some way to go behind the back of the text and pull out its authentic meaning. Rather it is part of an attempt to specify some of the particular conditions upon which realist forms necessarily exist and in terms of which their claims to legitimacy can only have sense (the logic of realism precisely claiming its validity through that which it represents).

Thus what we are designating as a particular realist movement — referring to a cluster of films circa 1959-63 including such films as *Room at the Top* (1959), *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), *A Taste of Honey* (1961), *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962), *A Kind of Loving* (1962) and the like — can be seen to draw upon a particular field of ideas which focuses issues for it and provides its 'sense' of reality. What it draws upon is a particular 'handling' of the data of social development by particular social groups and their construction into an account of changes within British capitalism. This constellation then, loosely translatable as a sort of 'ethical revisionism', can be seen to take shape pre-eminently within groupings on the left but drawing also on academic social science and the commonplaces of party political rhetoric. Thus the data of full employment, increasing productivity and post-war stability (with its mix of Keynesianism, mixed economy, and welfare state) was first accorded an undue achievement (in the absence of attention being drawn to the persistence of inequalities despite absolute increases in living standards or the 'temporary palliatives' (Pinto-Duschinsky, 1970, p. 59) — particularly in

the case of sterling — and the 'fortuitous circumstances' (Bogdanor and Skidelsky, 1970, p. 8) — such as the rapid growth in world trade and fall in commodity prices in the 1952-55 period — upon which such 'affluence' had been built) and then correspondingly read as undermining fundamental supports of a socialist economic strategy, the response to which was to effect a displacement away from a programme of economic advance towards an emphasis on socialism as an ethical system. Thus the editorial of the first *Universities and Left Review* (Spring 1957) complains that 'It was inevitable that the post-war generation should identify socialism at worst with the barbarities of Stalinist Russia, at best with the low pressure society of Welfare Britain' (p. 1) and presses its case as follows: 'The pressing need now is that socialist intellectuals should face the damage which Stalinism and Welfare Capitalism have done to socialist values — a sustained socialist movement must be informed by the belief that the moral imagination can now intervene creatively in human history' (p. 11). In doing so the classic armoury of cultural criticism was revamped to do service to the moral nullity of a consumer-durables society.

Hoggart's influential book, *The Uses of Literacy*, accordingly agrees upon the new economic emancipation of the working class, but continues to argue that 'commerce' rules the working class culturally and that 'this subjection promises to be stronger than the old because the chains of cultural subordination are both easier to wear and harder to strike away than those of economic subordination' (1957, p. 201). Thus in such analyses economic progress far from advancing the cause of socialism, could be read as undermining the very qualities required to sustain it. Crucial here was the opposition of a traditional working class grounded in a network of community and moral integrity now being eroded by the advance of mass society (just as a 'popular art' organic to such a tradition, expressing and confirming its values, was being eroded by a new synthetic and inauthentic mass art). Within such a complex then the call for 'reality' became less an epistemological one and more a moral one — a contradiction in part touched upon by Pauline Kael in her earlier lampoon against a similar set of critics: 'Surely Mr. Corbluth has let the cat out of the social realist bag: manual workers are more real than other people' (1966, p. 343). At one level this is of course absurd, but yet Kael's point fails to perceive the texture of feeling from which such a claim might be made. For in a sense for the 'sociolect' the manual working class were 'more real' precisely because their tradition represented an authenticity and vitality absent from mass, and indeed probably middle-class culture. But this claim was not made in the name

of a class in ascendance, but rather considered to be happy in such a position') had largely to be represented (intellectuals') who had the cultural understanding of the costs of society was seen to increase in proportion to the Young Men, CND, and so on). The social base, could easily slide into a legacy) or a generalised anti-materialist villain of the piece is 'commerce' (particular production relations) was not represented as an issue but rather that class was accorded that its continuation as a substantial credited; and likewise the demand much a progressive affirmation of capital and labour in the face of a final moral farewell to the work of the social stage (making way for groupings trapped alike under the

But if the realist movement vied for a broader social syntax it did not reach the level appropriate to it but was which was likewise refracted through the struggles of the British film industry. Thus the critique of commerce and specific commercial practices of cinema had likewise created nullity in which, it was argued, must stand the imagination who could restore vision. This would be achieved through the 'reality' (the potential contradiction) overcome through a notion of 'culture' could only be created in a context not only a re-connection with the genuinely popular art in which artists themselves rather than escape from art. As Tony Richardson, director of *The Long-distance Runner*, explained go on doing the sort of subjects

of a class in ascendance, but rather in decline and because that class was considered to be happy in such decline ('easily wearing its subordination') had largely to be represented by 'outsiders' ('socialist intellectuals') who had the cultural capital and 'moral imagination' to understand the costs of society's development and whose role of dissent was seen to increase in proportion to the working class's decline (Angry Young Men, CND, and so on). And this, in the absence of any particular social base, could easily slide into reactionary nostalgia (the Leavis legacy) or a generalised anti-materialism (thus for Hoggart the real villain of the piece is 'commerce' considered in abstraction from any particular production relations). Thus it is not strictly true that class was not represented as an issue in the culture (Dyer, 1977b, p. 16), but rather that class was accorded a recognition precisely at the time that its continuation as a substantial social force was no longer credited; and likewise the demand for 'class representation' was not so much a progressive affirmation of class and the unbridgeable gap between capital and labour in the face of an apparent victory of consent as a final moral farewell to the working class as they made their exit from the social stage (making way for 'youth' and other compartmentalised groupings trapped alike under the umbrella of the 'social problem').

But if the realist movement within the cinema can be seen as part of a broader social syntax it did not then merely express such attitudes at the level appropriate to it but was itself constitutive of that response which was likewise refracted through the particular context and struggles of the British film industry and its cinematic conventions. Thus the critique of commerce was particularised in terms of the specific commercial practices of the cinema with its stifling of creativity and corresponding restrictiveness of representation. 'Commerce' in the cinema had likewise created nullity and stereotyped uniformity against which, it was argued, must stand 'artists' (outsiders) of passion and imagination who could restore vitality and freshness to the cinema. This would be achieved through re-connecting with 'a sense of life' and 'reality' (the potential contradiction between art and reality being overcome through a notion of 'commitment' whereby authentic art could only be created in a context of social responsibility). This meant not only a re-connection with the traditional working-class but a genuinely popular art in which audiences could share and recognise themselves rather than escape from themselves in the fantasies of mass art. As Tony Richardson, director of *A Taste of Honey*, *The Loneliness of The Long-distance Runner*, etc., said in an interview: 'I would like to go on doing the sort of subjects I am doing now. Subjects related to the

world we are living in, the roles and the issues that are facing people in the society we are living in. I think films should be an immensely dynamic and potent force within society . . . '.

As the quote suggests, the novelty of the movement was largely conceived in terms of 'contents' (subjects) – of the presentation of the working class on the screen no longer as the stock types or comic butts of 'commercial' British cinema, but as 'real', 'fully-rounded' characters in 'real' settings (the regions, cities, factories etc.) with 'real' problems (both everyday and of the culture – freedom/restraint, purity/corruption, tradition/modernity, affluence/authenticity). And the ramifications of the notions of 'reality' dominated both promotion and critical reception: the 'reality' either being accepted and welcomed, denied as in fact 'false', or accepted but criticised in the interests of art (which requires more than a reproduction of reality) or entertainment (people already get enough of reality). However, this appropriation at the level of the 'represented' (whereby validity and authenticity are seen to reside primarily in proportion to the authenticity and validity of the pro-filmic event) away from its mode of representation was not accidental but also the product of the cinematic 'machine' which consisted not just of an ingrained notion of technique (the 180-degree rule, shot matching, editing for spatio-temporal continuity, diegetic and configurational continuity, concentration on particular scales of shots and angles, etc.) but the 'naturalisation' of these in terms of preconceptions of cinema and other available cinematic discourses. This might be characterised as not only an ingrained tradition of craftsmanship and film making (well discussed by Dyer (1977b) in terms of the 'organic film') but a subservience of this craft to the importance of 'themes and 'ideas' (characterised by MacArthur (1977) as the 'Anglo-American critical tradition' but finding a particular enshrinement in two influential British film movements; thus Tudor's verdict on the documentarists: 'Aesthetics is reduced to morally prescribed social theory' (1974, p. 75) and Alan Lovell's on Free Cinema: 'Free Cinema didn't show any great interest in aesthetic problems' (Lovell and Hillier 1972, p. 143)). These in turn intertwine with a fundamentalism and hostility towards stylisation which is not then just a 'fallacy of Realism' dependent on the bad faith or just plain idiocy of critics and film makers but an implantation with historical and material roots, such as the importance of documentary for both non-commercial and commercial film-making (the inheritance of British war movies and Ealing), the insulation of British culture from European modernism in the 1920s and 1930s at the very time that the 'documentary spirit' was achieving its hegemony

across the arts and the selective 1950s (the reception of Brecht cinema and consequent criticism by the moral entrepreneur inducing direct social effects) is project for a 'socially conscious' has been predominantly functional struggles), the lack of entry into traditionally filling 'creative' role a substantial émigré input at times serious state interest in film and conventions of the privileged society but is yet able to be seen as extending the logic of the basic also legitimated by its representation or clichéd cinematic convention minimised melodrama, location – with the push towards *cinéma* expectations of what would come

But these senses of limits are tions of audiences and film-makers powerful because of their 'unconstrained' embedded in the practical routine as we have argued, are not necessarily exert both pressures and resistance between the space of cinema defines in terms of its conditions institutions of representation, and actual active form cinema takes the period under consideration of being re-defined, a process which through its internal organisation only re-located cinema's place within (increasing the importance, for example) abilities for representation denied known 'decline of the cinema', and industry was re-shaped in acknowledgement. Withdrawal from direct existence. Withdrawal from direct was intensified, studios were displaced of projects became almost exclusively entrepreneur, now perhaps back

issues that are facing people in
s should be an immensely
y ...'.

f the movement was largely con-
— of the presentation of the
s the stock types or comic butts
'real', 'fully-rounded' characters
stories etc.) with 'real' problems
edom/restraint, purity/corrupt-
thenticity). And the ramifica-
ted both promotion and critical
epted and welcomed, denied as
in the interests of art (which
ality) or entertainment (people
, this appropriation at the level
nd authenticity are seen to
thenticity and validity of the
F representation was not acci-
matic 'machine' which consisted
ique (the 180-degree rule, shot
continuity, diegetic and configura-
ticular scales of shots and angles,
terms of preconceptions of
discourses. This might be charact-
of craftsmanship and film
) in terms of the 'organic film')
importance of 'themes and 'ideas'
the 'Anglo-American critical
nment in two influential
erdict on the documentarists:
bed social theory' (1974, p. 75)
e Cinema didn't show any great
nd Hillier 1972, p. 143)). These
m and hostility towards
cy of Realism' dependent on
cs and film makers but an
l roots, such as the importance
al and commercial film-making
nd Ealing), the insulation of
m in the 1920s and 1930s at
'rit' was achieving its hegemony

across the arts and the selective appropriation of modernist ideas in the 1950s (the reception of Brecht, for example), the general denigration of cinema and consequent critical neglect, with its concomitant annexation by the moral entrepreneurs whose problematic (the media as producing direct social effects) is merely inverted in the liberal-humanist project for a 'socially conscious' film (just as film for the British left has been predominantly functional to direct political and economic struggles), the lack of entry into the industry from those social groups traditionally filling 'creative' roles (and hence very often the evidence of a substantial émigré input at times of apparent vitality), the lack of serious state interest in film and so on. Originality is thus bounded by conventions of the privileged signified and the good/intelligible film, but is yet able to be seen as introducing an 'increased reality' by extending the logic of the basic terms. Thus, the 'new' represented is also legitimated by its representation being in negative relation to 'false' or clichéd cinematic conventions which it then replaces through minimised melodrama, location shooting, unknown regional actors etc. — with the push towards *cinéma vérité* then being held in check by expectations of what would constitute a 'proper' film.

But these senses of limits are not merely the constitutive expectations of audiences and film-makers (which may yet be all the more powerful because of their 'unconscious' internalisation) but are also embedded in the practical routines of institutionalised producers which, as we have argued, are not necessarily determinative but which nonetheless exert both pressures and restraints. Ellis (1977) has drawn a distinction between the space of cinema within the social formation, which he defines in terms of its conditions of existence and relations to other institutions of representation, and cinema's internal organisation, the actual active form cinema takes. And in these terms it is clear that in the period under consideration the space of cinema was in the process of being re-defined, a process which was consequently expressed through its internal organisation. Thus the appearance of television not only re-located cinema's place within the relations of representation (increasing the importance, for example, of the X-film with its possibilities for representation denied to TV) but began to force the well known 'decline of the cinema', while the internal organisation of the industry was re-shaped in acknowledgement of its new conditions of existence. Withdrawal from direct production by the major combines was intensified, studios were disposed of or leased, and capitalisation of projects became almost exclusively dependent on the individual entrepreneur, now perhaps backed by the state in the form of 'end

money' provided by the NFFC. With a replacement of direct combine control of production by an indirect one through maintained control of distribution and exhibition and a new 'openness' to ideas which might turn the tide of decline, a possibility of innovation was allowed though subject to the demands of financial success. Thus despite the difficulties of capitalisation faced by earlier projects -- *Look Back in Anger* only got Warners' finance and hence ABC handling because Burton was owed a picture which they would have had to pay him for anyway; *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* failed to find a backer when Joseph Janni owned the rights and later when made by Woodfall only hit lucky due to a Warners' West End cinema falling vacant, and the film was only able to fill the vacancy through producer Harry Saltzman's previous ties with Warners -- by the time of *This Sporting Life* the commercial viability of the 'realists' had been established to such an extent that Karel Reisz's suggestion of Lindsay Anderson as director was accepted without demur despite Anderson's lack of previous feature experience. However, with the film's financial failure, full circle was turned with Rank's chairman, John Davis, being quick to inform us that the public didn't want 'dreary kitchen-sink dramas' and that 'independent producers . . . should make films of entertainment value' (Husra, 1964). That this signalled to a large extent the end of the movement tells us something of the limits of the challenge that had been made to the industry. Control had been conceived in terms of an overcoming of the fragmentation of skills concomitant upon cinema's 'factory system' through a unification of control under the director, and this was to some extent 'won' in the leeway given to independents, but it was a control dependent on a system founded upon monopoly in distribution and exhibition which through its 'distribution guarantees' accorded the duopoly a right of appraisal and definitional status over the category of 'entertainment'. This could dominate over competing versions of others and in this case ultimately did so (though it might also be argued that the movement destroyed itself anyway through becoming seen to be 'conventional' and hence de-legitimising its claims to 'reality').

The purpose here then, in an albeit abbreviated fashion, has been to suggest the need to avoid a-priorism and over-abstraction in the theorisation of both ideology and realism (the two being here brought together through the dominance of realism within British cinema, whose characterisation has been necessarily selective, and the attempts of current work to define realism as intrinsically ideological). An emphasis on effectivity has suggested the necessity of analysis neither in terms of origins nor textual characteristics alone, but in relation to the particular

complex of circumstances in w
case discussed here, then, I hav
socio-historical specificity of m
certain of their sense would be
maintains an awareness of cine
the 'machine') and its particula
thirdly, understood in terms of
positions and spaces constructe
a consequence of all three I ho
qualities cannot be assessed in
duction of film-making, availab
other available cinematic and s
ture. And thus the ideological
one read off from a class base
un-unified one articulated in r
courses and to socio-political c
(constitute) but from which th

Notes

1. Cf. Murdock and Golding's p
swamped by the volume of mainst
claim for the 'contradictions' inter
reality that is grounded in private
imperative therefore ends by unde
legitimacy rests' (1976, p. 157). Th
commercial imperatives will not ne
would appear conducive to capital
case of *The Angry Silence*. In *Film*
income level of those who control
film, had it been ten times cruder
of distribution and exhibition bef
precisely what it was not. Only on
all in the film and only then after
sacrifice of fees by many of the lea
profits, such as they might be.

2. Indeed, the whole issue is so
selection of a representative for se
unproblematic reading of a rather
able' assertion it is unclear what a
relations might mean (if to be mor
is produced within a particular set
reveals a hesitancy, and through hi
mode of production' tends to effe
relations under the category of 'lit
largely understood as those of the

ement of direct combine
ough maintained control of
ness' to ideas which might
vation was allowed though
Thus despite the difficulties
ook Back in Anger only
g because Burton was owed
him for anyway; *Saturday*
cker when Joseph Janni
odfall only hit lucky due
and the film was only
ry Saltzman's previous
ing Life the commercial
to such an extent that
as director was accepted
vious feature experience.
circle was turned with
inform us that the public
that 'independent pro-
t value' (Husra, 1964).
f the movement tells us
ad been made to the
s of an overcoming of the
ema's 'factory system'
ector, and this was to
pendents, but it was a
monopoly in distribution
guarantees' accorded the
status over the category of
mpeting versions of others
ight also be argued that
h becoming seen to be
ims to 'reality').
ated fashion, has been to
abstraction in the
two being here brought
hin British cinema, whose
and the attempts of
deological). An emphasis
alysis neither in terms of
relation to the particular

complex of circumstances in which film texts are materialised. For the case discussed here, then, I have argued for a recognition of first, the socio-historical specificity of media ideologies (without which a grasp of certain of their sense would be impossible) but one which, secondly, maintains an awareness of cinematic specificity (the determinations of the 'machine') and its particular level of effectivity which is not then, thirdly, understood in terms of autonomy but rather in terms of the positions and spaces constructed at the level of the economic. Hence as a consequence of all three I hold that progressive or reactionary qualities cannot be assessed independently of the conditions of production of film-making, available modes of consumption as well as other available cinematic and socio-political discourses within the culture. And thus the ideological performance of the films is not a unitary one read off from a class base or a production process but a complex, un-unified one articulated in relation both to specific cinematic discourses and to socio-political ones which in part they support (constitute) but from which they also in part dissent.

Notes

1. Cf. Murdock and Golding's position that oppositional views 'are easily swamped by the volume of mainstream output' (p. 38) with Alvin Gouldner's claim for the 'contradictions' internal to a system of producing accounts of social reality that is grounded in private ownership: 'The hegemonic class's profit imperative therefore ends by undermining the very culture on which its own legitimacy rests' (1976, p. 157). The obverse of this can also be formulated — commercial imperatives will not necessarily lead to an investment in that which would appear conducive to capital's long-term interests. Take, for example, the case of *The Angry Silence*. In *Film World* Ivor Montagu (1964) argues 'Seeing the income level of those who control the controlling circuits in this country, such a film, had it been ten times cruder than it was, must inevitably have been certain of distribution and exhibition before ever it was begun' (p. 271). Yet this was precisely what it was not. Only one company could be found with any interest at all in the film and only then after £40,000 had been lopped off the bill through a sacrifice of fees by many of the leading participants in favour of a share of the profits, such as they might be.

2. Indeed, the whole issue is something of a red herring relying on a peculiar selection of a representative for semiotics (Terry Eagleton) and an assumed unproblematic reading of a rather confused claim. Far from being a 'very reasonable' assertion it is unclear what a text's 'internalisation' of its production relations might mean (if to be more than a mere axiom of the sort that every text is produced within a particular set of production relations). Eagleton himself reveals a hesitancy, and through his unsure employment of the notion of 'literary mode of production' tends to effect an unhappy elision of two distinct types of relations under the category of 'literary relations of production' — relations largely understood as those of the mode of production proper and those operant

between text and audience. And thus while probably attempting a 'stronger' and thus more tenuous claim he is likely to be more correctly seen as constructing an argument about relations of consumption and not relations of production at all and hence to be reading forward from text to audience (interestingly one of the relations submerged in Murdock and Golding's analysis) rather than back from text to production relations, as full quotation of the relevant passage reveals: 'One might add, too, that every literary text in some sense internalises its social relations of production — that every text intimates by its very conventions the way it is to be consumed, encodes within itself its own ideology of how, by whom and for whom it was produced. Every text obliquely posits a putative reader, defining its productability in terms of a certain capacity for consumption' (Eagleton, 1976, p. 48).

3. Brewster (1973) attempts this by establishing rules of pertinence in accordance with motivations generated within the textual system itself (though insofar as the 'implicit reader' which this is supposed to predicate is never empirically found not altogether without contradiction). Henderson (1973/74) rightly criticises Brewster for his attempt to impose Metzian terms within a foreign problematic, but in re-stating *Cahiers'* own rules of pertinence he hardly resolves the issue which Brewster was at least attempting to face: 'The *Cahiers* reading goes beyond the text relating what is present to what is absent, thereby defining its own principles of pertinence' (Henderson, 1973/74, p. 43). The rules of pertinence then may be the properties of the studying discourse (*Cahiers'* reading) rather than of the text itself (*Young Mr Lincoln*), but then that hardly exempts that discourse from the demands of validity and coherence.

6

RETHINKING ST

T.E. Perkins

Two major interests inform the argued, it is politically important, are, how they function, ideologies are so resilient in the face of opposition paper attempts to indicate what problems, and to propose some which might provide ideas for advance for political action. It shows paper many of whose ideas are

The second interest which ideology and the concept of value: believe that a Marxist approach account of ideology, I nevertheless attempts to theorise ideology: the unwillingness of theorists theories. Consequently the use of actual ideological processes stereotypes is as yet hard to as from this: stereotypes seem to therefore be capable of being ideology; conversely as ideological and easily identifiable kind the studying the practice of ideology requires a broader perspective provided by psychological studies: tive that can account for their least to test hypotheses about the moment the generally accepted about, stereotypes may actual theoretical statements about I say this is, of course, to draw presuppositions about ideology is based. Let me outline these

Ideology must be understood ideas and as being inconsistent

IDEOLOGY AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Edited by Michèle Barrett, Philip Corrigan,
Annette Kuhn and Janet Wolff



CROOM HELM LONDON